

Recycling IQ Kit Funding and Technical Assistance Guidance

Overview

Use this document to learn how to apply for funding and technical assistance to implement the [Recycling IQ Kit](#). The Recycling IQ Kit has been designed to provide steps, tools, and resources to help improve the quality of your recycling program. Increasing the quality of the recycling stream can save on disposal fees, improve resident satisfaction with your program, and ensures the success and sustainability of the recycling system.

The toolkit includes:

- Guidance for engaging with your MRF and hauler
- Instructions and tools for targeted messages
- Tools for tracking and reporting results
- Customizable artwork for education and outreach
- Resources for implementation of direct curbside/drop-off feedback

Communities awarded this technical assistance will also receive funds for printed materials, distribution, staff time for curbside enforcement, and data tracking. The Recycling IQ Kit is an open-source document that is available to any interested municipalities.

Eligible Applicants

Individual Massachusetts municipalities are eligible to apply for this assistance.

Application Submission Process

1. Read the Recycling IQ Kit and all of the accompanying resources
2. Speak with your Municipal Assistance Coordinator to determine your readiness for implementing the Recycling IQ Kit in its entirety
3. Apply for Recycling IQ Kit Technical Assistance via [Re-TRAC Connect™](#)
4. Municipal Recycling Data Reporting
 - a. At the time the application is submitted, applicants must have completed and submitted via Re-TRAC Connect™ Municipal Recycling and Solid Waste Surveys for the two previous calendar years
5. Complete the Recycling IQ Kit Assessment Tool and upload the Recycling IQ Kit Assessment Tool into Re-TRAC Connect™ to complete the application process

Evaluation criteria

Applicants will be evaluated on criteria that may include, but not be limited to:

- Information provided on Recycling and Solid Waste Program Surveys
- Information provided on Assessment Tool

- Past grant performance including outstanding grant requirements
- Other criteria as determined by MassDEP

Terms and Conditions

- Municipalities receiving Recycling IQ Kit funds must sign a Scope of Work with standard operating procedures, timeline, and budget.
- Recycling IQ Kit funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis based on actual costs and an approved budget.
- Reimbursable expenses must be incurred after the Scope of Work, operating procedures, timeline, and budget have been approved by MassDEP.
- Outstanding MassDEP compliance issues, including past due required reports, may not disqualify a municipality from receiving an award. HOWEVER, any such award may be conditioned upon the satisfactory resolution of said compliance issue.

Timeline

- Applications will be accepted, reviewed, and awarded on a rolling basis
- Most awards will be made within three weeks of submission
- *All projects must be implemented between May 1 and November 30*

Funding Amounts

All applicants with curbside programs that agree to implement the prescribed elements of the program will be provided the following resources based on total number of households (HH):

- HH <2,000 = up to \$10,000
- HH 2,000 – 2,999= up to \$15,000
- HH 3,000 – 5,999= up to \$20,000
- HH 6,000 – 11,999= up to \$30,000
- HH >12,000= \$40,000

All applicants with drop-off programs that agree to implement the prescribed elements of the program will be provided the following resources:

- Up to \$7500

Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) time of up to 40 hours will be provided to new applicants (curbside and drop-off). Communities that have implemented the program in previous years will have reduced access to MAC time, but will still receive MassDEP support as needed.

Deliverables to be submitted and approved by MassDEP prior to making expenditures that will be reimbursed by the grant

- Detailed budget of all relevant program expenses including those paid for by the municipality and those to be reimbursed by MassDEP

- Standard Operating Procedures detailing the project plan, data collection plan, etc.
- Detailed timeline that includes program start and stop dates, collateral materials ordering and mailing dates, maintenance dates, and any other relevant information

Reporting Requirements:

A final report summarizing the project, conclusions, and recommendations or next steps (as appropriate) in a format prescribed by MassDEP must be submitted by December 31 of the calendar year the program is implemented. The report must include:

- Curbside set-out rate, curbside tagging rate and contamination rate (curbside programs) OR Contamination rate and drop-off visitation (drop-off programs)
- Returning IQ Kit recipients: results from program maintenance checks (as outlined in scope of work)

Grantees must complete their annual MassDEP Recycling and Solid Waste Survey by February 15 of the year following program implementation.

Use of Recycling IQ Kit Funds

Funds must be used to implement a recycling contamination enforcement program using the prescribed methodology in the Recycling IQ Kit. Funds *may not* be used to conduct general recycling program duties, pay for an existing Recycling Coordinator or to enforce other violations not expressly documented in the Recycling IQ Kit and Scope of Work. **Hours worked on any part of this project by full-time, salaried employees are not eligible for reimbursement.** Part-time salaried employees who work on contamination enforcement, data gathering, and analysis are only eligible for reimbursement for hours that are in addition to their regularly scheduled time.

Reimbursable Activities

At a minimum, municipalities receiving Recycling IQ Kit funds will need to print the Core Tools which, for curbside communities, consist of an annual info card mailer, a targeted message mailer, “oops” tags and “thank-you” tags (optional). For drop-off communities, the Core Tools consist of an annual information card that can be distributed at the drop-off location, top issue signage to be temporarily and strategically placed around the site, and uniform permanent site signage.

- In addition to the Core Tools, funds may be used for:
 - Staff at drop-off locations who will engage and educate residents about proper recycling
 - Staff to lift recycling cart lids on curbside collection routes, collect, and analyze data
 - Printing other collateral materials from artwork in Recycling IQ Kit
 - Developing social media materials related to contamination reduction such as videos and/or promoting your local program on social media platforms
 - Recycling web page design/updating

Printed Material

Unless otherwise approved by MassDEP, municipalities receiving Recycling IQ Kit funds must use Tiger Press (state contracted printing vendor) for printed materials. Tiger Press will bill MassDEP directly for all printed material included in the approved budget. An initial meeting should be set with Tiger Press to discuss selected options and receive quotes within two weeks of kick-off meeting. *Note: All postage must be paid for by municipality and submitted for reimbursement to MassDEP¹.*

Certain exceptions apply:

- A city or town with a strong relationship with a local printer may continue to use that printer with approval from MassDEP. In this case, the municipality will be billed directly for all services and will submit for reimbursement to MassDEP.
- A-frames and yard signs may be purchased through another vendor, though Tiger Press does provide these services.
- Tiger Press can do transfer station signs, however, MassDEP recommends using a vendor that specializes in street signs.

A complete list of pre-approved printed and media materials will be provided at the time of your application approval. Any ideas for printed materials that are not on the pre-approved list must be reviewed and approved by MassDEP before purchase.

MassDEP is working toward consistent messaging across the Commonwealth. To that end, artwork and Core Tools may be customized with city/town name, seal, website, contact information, and secondary language. **No other modifications will be allowed.**

MassDEP strongly encourages municipalities to use RDP funds to subsidize this program in the case that IQ Kit funds do not cover all expenses.

Graphic Design Work

Municipalities receiving Recycling IQ Kit funds may use any graphic designer of their choice; however Tiger Press' prices include design and set-up fees. **MassDEP will only cover the cost of TWO rounds of proofing, regardless of graphic designer/printer.**

Community Match

While we do not require a monetary match for technical assistance, there is an in-kind match requirement for IQ Kit assistance. That match is the hours spent by the Recycling Coordinator to set up this program. Those activities include, but are not limited to:

¹ The default method for postage will be the use of Walk Sequence Saturation Mail. Standard Mail may be acceptable in some cases, but requires changes to formatting, and thus incurs an additional expense for modification by the printer. Note: Estimates for postage are NOT exact. Create a buffer in your budget to allow for unforeseen costs.

- Determining project goals and bringing stakeholders together to achieve goals
- Data Gathering. Determining which routes to target (working with GIS or planning department to obtain mailing addresses/parcel map), understanding current contamination level, speaking with MRF to determine on which contaminant(s) to focus targeted messaging, and other relevant data gathering
- Logistics. Collaborating with hauler to ensure municipal staff can enforce before trucks pick up, setting up grading system and frequency of load evaluation with MRF operators, etc.
- Budgeting
- Education and outreach. Choosing outreach pieces, working with printer to obtain quotes and finalize materials, researching methods for advertising, (e.g. setting up advertising with Facebook, local grocery stores, putting signs up at schools, setting up radio ads/Youtube videos, or billboards), setting up information card(s) mailing schedule, ordering printed material, mailers and signage.
- Scoping the project. Developing timelines for kick-off meeting, core tool preparation, launch, operational period, evaluation, submission of scope and associated documents
- Tactics. Developing enforcement protocols, training staff, creating data collection sheets/methods
- Staffing. Hiring workers, developing roles and responsibilities, prepping municipal workers who interact with residents about the program (in order to answer residents' questions)
- Writing final report

Pro Tips from folks who've used the IQ Kit:

- ✓ **It will take 6-8 weeks of preparation time to set up this program.** Consider this very seriously when setting your launch date. Review the Curbside Checklist prior to starting to get an idea of the steps you will need to take to be successful.
- ✓ Speak to your printer early and often to insure you have a reasonable budget and are able to maintain your timeline.
- ✓ Practice and training work! MassDEP will pay for staff time to do at least one walk through of a route for training purposes. This will allow you to get a baseline failure/set-out rate, build consistency among staff, and understand just how long it takes to get through the number of parcels you've chosen for each route.
- ✓ Consider using a phone or tablet app to collect data in the field. MassDEP does not endorse any one company, nor can we offer guidance if you choose to use an app.
- ✓ Inclement weather is hard on "oops tags," data sheets, and enforcement staff. You can be flexible and simply add weeks to the end of your program to make up for any days you were unable to inspect and tag recycling carts.

- ✓ Anticipate vacation weeks and schedule around them. You can start earlier or tack on a week at the end to avoid wasted efforts on these weeks.
- ✓ Have talking points ready. Figure out a message that will resonate with your residents, and when they ask why you are doing what you're doing, have those messages top of mind. Focus groups have found that worker health and safety is a powerful message that doesn't require a lot of explanation: Workers climb onto star screens to clean off plastic bags and wrapping and that is dangerous. Another message that often resonates is simple economics: Our processing costs go up if our recycling is contaminated.
- ✓ Revisit your checklist often to make sure you are on track.